

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2000-293

April 5, 2000

MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Request for Waiver to Postpone the April 1, 2000
Planned Implementation of Chapter 297 (Anti-cramming
Rule) for 90 Days

ORDER

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

In this Order, we grant Bell Atlantic-Maine's request that the Commission waive initial implementation of Chapter 297 of the Commission's rules until July 1, 2000.

II. BACKGROUND

On December 20, 1999, the Commission adopted Chapter 297 of its rules. Anti-Cramming Rule: Registration and Customer Authorization Requirements, Complaint Procedures, and Penalty Provisions for Billing Agents, Service Providers, and Billing Aggregators, Docket No. 99-717, Order (Dec. 20, 1999). Chapter 297 requires billing aggregators and service providers to register with the Commission before placing charges for goods or services on a customer's telephone bill. The rule took effect on January 19, 2000. However, the Commission did not notify interested persons that it would commence registrations on April 1, 2000, until March 3, 2000.

III. DECISION

On March 27, 2000, Bell Atlantic-Maine (Bell) requested "a ninety day extension of the April 1 planned implementation date for service providers and billing aggregators." Bell asserts that 20 business days from the date of the Commission's notice is insufficient for it to reach all affected parties. Specifically, many of the service providers and billing aggregators using Bell's services will not have time to register by April 1. Further, Bell will not have time to eliminate the charges of all non-complying entities.

We find that Bell's request regarding compliance with the April 1 registration deadline is reasonable and, therefore, waive the application of Sections 3 and 4 of the Rule until July 1, 2000. Given that 35-A M.R.S.A. Bell's assurances that it will continue its present practice of "aggressively eliminating any and all disreputable service providers/billing aggregators from its billing agreements" and that delay of the implementation date should not adversely affect consumer's interests.

Accordingly, we

O R D E R

1. The deadline for implementation of the Commission's Chapter 297, sections 3 and 4 is extended from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2000.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 5th day of April, 2000.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
Nugent
Diamond